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ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions rely increasingly on their faculty to create, implement, and validate administrative decisions. As a result, the position of faculty governance body leader provides a meaningful example of the type of faculty member who becomes involved in campus activities outside the normal workload. This study examined the work motivation of college faculty relative to campus governance activities. Data were collected as part of the 5-year National Data Base on Faculty Involvement in Governance. Responses were received from 84 faculty senate leaders. Faculty, through self-ratings were found to be motivated to become involved in extra work activities by feelings of empowerment, responsibility, and the importance of the decision making. Faculty leaders also identified characteristics of an ideal governance structure, rating the empowerment to question policy and early involvement in decision making as among the most desirable characteristics. (Contains 13 references.) (Author/SLD)

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Adult Work Motivation for Involvement in Shared Governance Activities Among Faculty Senate Leaders

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Abstract

Higher education institutions rely increasingly on their faculty to create, implement, and validate administrative decisions. As a result, the position of faculty governance body leader provides a meaningful example of who becomes involved in campus activities outside the realm of their normal workload. The current study examines the work motivation of college faculty relative to campus governance activities. The results of the national study in the United States has broad implications for involving faculty in a host of activities, including distance education. Faculty, through self-ratings, were found to be primarily motivated to become in additional work assignments due to feelings of empowerment, responsibility, and the importance of the decision making. Faculty leaders also identified characteristics of an ideal governance structure, rating an empowerment to question policy and early involvement in decision making among the most desirable.

Higher education institutions continue to experience growth in diverse and often conflicting realms. Increases in courses for continuing professional education and through distance learning technologies have become increasingly commonplace, while the demand for traditional four-year collegiate experiences has reached a plateau in the United States during the past decade. Combined with fewer state and federal resources, higher education leaders have been placed in a position of attempting to maximize institutional performance and efficiency, while simultaneously working to assure quality human resources in all areas, ranging from fund raising professionals to admissions counselors. One area in specific has arisen to be a hallmark of administrative efforts for shared decision-making: the college faculty member.

The current college faculty member is typically a highly specialized individual with extensive professional preparation. Despite the professional nature of the position, these individuals are treated with suspicion, caution, and are given relatively little professional responsibility outside of their teaching assignments. Due in part to legal limitations which restrict the ability of the administrator to assign faculty members administrative or governance activities (Miles, Miller, & Anderson, 1996), the

concept of shared governance generally has been reported as beneficial to institutional morale and institutional culture. Although the direct benefit of involvement to teaching may be inconclusive (Smylie, Lazarus, Brownlee-Conyers, 1996),.research has consistently demonstrated
that those who participate in decision-making have higher levels of morale and feel better about their workplace.

Accepting that involvement in governance activities has positive benefits to both the faculty member and the institution, there is a need to understand adult work motivation within the context of higher education, particularly among college faculty who voluntarily choose to be involved in campus decision-making. Beyond the basic understanding of why these individuals perform in their work environment, it is necessary for administrators, policy makers, and those interested in higher education to identify why these faculty go beyond their basic job responsibilities and become involved in additional areas of work. The premise of the current study is that faculty member preform their job responsibilities for a host of reasons currently identified in academic literature, but the issue of why faculty become active in shared decision-making has not been explored. The purpose for conducting the current study was to

identify why faculty become involved in leadership positions within the framework of shared governance units. Although the study sample was limited to faculty working and residing in the United States, findings are applicable to many global faculty groups and researchers pursuing the issue of adult work motivation and college faculty issues.

Trends in Shared Governance

Private sector business and industry leaders have given an increasing amount of attention to the concepts of team work and shared authority, often cloaked in the terminology of quality circles and the quality management movement. This attention has similarly become incorporated into many aspects of higher education, although most efforts have been directed at institutional business operations. Despite this focus for teaming activities in business operations, faculty involvement in institutional decision making has become more common in both academic literature and in practice. Gilmour (1991), for example, reported that over 90% of all colleges and universities incorporate some form of faculty involvement mechanism, such as a faculty senate or faculty council.

The outgrowth of increased faculty involvement has typically been attention to defining the roles and responsibilities of individual faculty members, either

through formal letters of appointment or stringent tenure and promotion guidelines which broadly define service to include institutional governance. Community colleges, in particular, have had some difficulty in working to involve faculty, largely due to legal decisions which has defined the extent of involvement. Two particular court rulings in the United States, Connick v. Meyer and Minnesota v. Knight have both restricted the role of faculty members to instructional activities (Miles, 1987). This litigation has been so decisive that many administrators make an effort not to assign or request faculty involvement in co-governance activities (Miles, Miller, & Anderson, 1996).

While community colleges have worked to more clearly define the activities and responsibilities of faculty, many four-year colleges and universities have had difficulty in constructing a meaningful mechanism for faculty involvement. Research in this area has revealed that major issues of trust between faculty and administrators often hinder the co-governance process (Miller & Seagren, 1993), and regardless of tenure status or faculty rank, many faculty find they must work hard to gain respect from administrators and must demand that their collective voices be heard (McCormack, 1995). Bergman (1992) reflected this sentiment when she wrote of "bloated administrations and blighted campuses," (p. 16), referring to the

continued specialization among administrators and dwindling resources for faculty.

Despite the confusion on campus over the mechanics of institutional decision making, the concept of shared governance consistently is identified as being in concert with better morale among faculty, a friendly, more collegial climate on campus, and allusions have also been made to benefits in instructional delivery (see Smylie, Lazarus, & Brownlee-Conyers, 1996 for a through treatment of the benefits of involved teachers). Disadvantages of involvement typically revolve around efficiency and the timely manner of decision making, and the requesting of faculty to become involved in professional responsibility outside of their areas of expertise. Miller and Seagren (1993) identified a series of techniques for increasing involvement, but relied on general themes to reflect the nature of current involvement activities: organizational structure, administrative behaviors, organizational culture, and institutional policies for decision making.

Research and practice related to participatory decision making has focused on institutional measures, and has largely neglected the relationships between involvement and the faculty member. Considering the highly trained, mature, workforce which comprises the professorate, the need to better understand and

operationalize the motivations of involved faculty is important to all involved in institutional administration, ranging from department chairs to college presidents, not to mention those with responsibilities in faculty development.

Adult Work Motivation

The motivation for individuals to work has received consistent and conflicting research during the past several decades. Due largely to recent trends focusing on the value of human capitol and sweat equity, both private sector businesses and higher education institutions have come to recognize the value of providing training and development activities which reinforce those positive factors which enhance positive work motivation.

Work motivation has been discussed in terms of childhood learning (Gellerman, 1963; Miller, 1963), organizational leadership (McCay, 1970), a need to work or not work (Levine, 1974), a combination of the individual worker, the job, and the environment of work (Steers & Porter, 1975), combinations of these variables, such as personal attributes, the environment, and an individuals' background (Farmer, 1987), broad studies of the worker's atmosphere (Kopp, 1988), and personal investment in work (Maehr & Braskamp, 1986).

Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) Personal Investment Theory has received strong support in both the research and practice, and contends that individuals have a primary impetus to work, which can be traced to one of four guiding principles: accomplishment, affiliation, achievement, and power. Faculty members may differ somewhat from this, drawing upon intellectual motivation, autonomy, and the intellectual ambiance of the college campus to be driving forces in a desire to work in a faculty position.

Research Methods

Data for the current study were collected as part of the five-year, institutionally funded National Data Base on Faculty Involvement in Governance (NDBFIG) project at The University of Alabama. The Data Base was begun in 1994 with the collection of perceptual data from faculty members who were involved in governance activities, such as faculty senates, forums, councils, and advisory committees. The Data Base is directed by a group of seven faculty members and administrators in the United States who have both academic and administrative experience working with faculty groups.

Data were collected through a research-team developed four-section survey instrument. The instrument was pilot tested with two faculty groups at

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different universities which had previously participated in Data Base activities. Section one was validated through group input from the Data Base Board of Directors and was designed to collect background information from respondents. The second section of the survey had been included as part of the previous Data Base survey activities, and has consistently achieved a Cronbach alpha level of between .70 and .81. This section of the survey contained five items related to an ideal governance structure. A Cronbach alpha was also implemented on the pilot test data for sections three and four of the survey instrument. The third section, containing 14 items on the motivation of faculty governance leaders to be involved, had an index of .73. The fourth section of the survey included 11 items related to the skills required to be a faculty governance body leader, and had an Cronbach index of .88. Sections two, three, and four all utilized a 5-point Likert-type response scale, where 1=Strongly Disagree with the statement and 5=Strongly Agree with the statement. Section one of the survey requested categorical responses from respondents.

The sample for the study included 100 randomly selected faculty governance leaders at different higher education institutions in the United States. The institutions were randomly selected from a comprehensive listing of all four- year colleges and

universities. Upon institutional selection, efforts were made to identify the individual who held the title of faculty senate (or similar organization such as university faculty council and faculty forum) president through both internet resources and telephone inquiries. Surveys were mailed to the identified sample in August and September 1996.

Findings

After two follow-up mailings, a total of 84 faculty senate leaders responded to the survey (84% response rate). Due to the nature of several respondents who held primarily administrative positions rather than faculty positions, however, a total usable response rate of 78% was achieved (n=78). The majority of respondents (70%; n=55) held the rank of Full Professor, and 24% (n=19) held the rank of Associate Professor. The majority of respondents were also male (67%; n=52), and held their academic rank in the Liberal Arts/Humanities (47%), Science (17%), or Education (13%), and 51% reported that they viewed their role as one of task orientation and 49% reported viewing their role as having a process orientation.

Ideal Governance Structure

Four items on the survey related tot he concept of an ideal governance structure. These characteristics were derived from the Miller and Seagren (1993) and

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Gilmour (1991) studies, and were presented in McCormack's comparison of an ideal governance structure by faculty rank.

Faculty governance leaders responding to the study agreed most strongly that an ideal co-governance system would allow faculty to question policy decisions through a well articulated process (mean 4.58; see Table 1). Faculty also agreed strongly that an ideal governance structure should be utilized as a conduit through which faculty participation is solicited (mean 4.25) and institutional procedures should involve faculty early in the decision making process (mean 4.25).

The final two statements in this section, including the extent to which faculty are rewarded for their involvement and the use of external mediators or consultants both were rated close to "neutral." The characteristics of faculty being rewarded for their involvement had a mean rating of 3.49, and the use of external consultants had a mean rating of 2.92.

Motivation for Involvement

This section of the survey was comprised of 14 items which were identified through structured interviews with faculty involved in the governance process at universities participating in the NDBFIG project. Each of the factors were also confirmed as a

workplace motivator through an extensive literature review.

Of the 14 motivating factors, five had a mean rating of between 4.0 and 5.0, including agreement to strong agreement that the factor was a motivator for the respondents involvement in faculty governance activities. These five factors included: empowerment (mean 4.58); sense of responsibility (mean 4.33); importance of decision making (mean 4.18); asked to serve/be involved (mean 4.16); and sense of professionalism (mean 4.01; see Table 2).

These motivational factors were then stratified by the respondent's classification of role orientation or process orientation to serving as a faculty governance body leader. A one-way Analysis of Variance revealed significant differences on motivational factors: sense of ownership and quest for knowledge (see Table 2 for F Probability). Process-oriented faculty leaders agreed more strongly with both the motivational factors, sense of ownership (process-oriented faculty mean 4.20 compared to 3.72) and quest for knowledge (mean of 3.54 compared to 3.05) as an incentives for involvement, than task-oriented faculty leaders.

Discussion

The motivation of faculty to be involved with institutional governance has tremendous importance to

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both administrators and faculty alike, as many institutions are forced to respond to increasingly complex and diverse issues. In the area of distance learning, for example, faculty often volunteer to teach courses utilizing distance education technology, and this type of motivation to try something different in and out of the classroom is vital to future institutional success. The current study, although limited to governance activities, reveals important dimensions for faculty involvement.

First, faculty demonstrated that they largely are involved with institutional governance and decision making to gain a sense of empowerment, because they feel a sense of professional responsibility, the importance of decision making, and because they are simply asked to be involved. Responses further demonstrated that faculty desire to treated with respect and to be given what they may perceive to be real authority and responsibility over decision making outcomes. This finding was reinforced in the perceptions of an ideal governance structure, where respondents strongly agreed that they should be empowered to question policy.

Second, faculty leaders were found to be only moderately motivated by a quest for knowledge or due to self-interests. This finding represents a sense of altruism among faculty, albeit a cautious one, as noted

in the responses to the ideal governance structure which indicated a negative perception of using neutral consultants to resolve conflict.

Interestingly, the orientation of the individual holding the leadership position, whether viewing the voluntary assignment as a task orientation or a process orientation, made difference in only two of the twelve motivational factors. Thus, the faculty leader may see the facilitating of others actions similar to the leader who views the role as an instigator of collective faculty action.

Third, findings of the study indicate no clear consensus on validating literature in the area of work motivation. Results of the survey validate, to some extent, Steers and Porter's contention that a combination of variables serve as motivational incentives, yet Farmer's work as well as Maehr and Braskamp's appeared have equal weight in serving as motivational paradigms for college faculty to go beyond their typical workload assignments.

As colleges and universities ask more of their faculty, more study must be incorporated into the realm of adult work motivation as well as lifelong learning to better conceptualize how these faculty members will respond to additional workload assignments. In particular, current events and episodes which voluntary involve faculty in campus activities may prove to be a

fruitful beginning for this much needed research. The current study provides a baseline for this research, yet much must be done, both from faculty and administrative perspectives, to create meaningful mechanisms for motivating the broad spectrum of faculty careers, personalities, and attitudes which create the exciting mosaic of higher education.

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Table 1

Agreement toward Ideal Governance Structure Characteristics

Characteristic	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N
Faculty are empowered to question policy through a well articulated process.	4.58	.590	3	5	77
The faculty advisory board is used as a conduit through which faculty participation in solicited.	4.25	.930	1	5	75
Institutional procedures involve faculty input early in the decision making process.	4.25	1.13	1	5	77
Faculty members are adequately rewarded for their participation in the governance process.	3.49	1.17	1	5	75
Neutral consultants are utilized to mediate faculty-administration disagreements.	2.92	1.09	1	5	75

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Table 2

Agreement with Motivational Factors

Factor	Mean	SD	Range	F Prob.*
Empowerment	4.58	.593	2	.3023
Sense of responsibility	4.33	.658	2	.4283
Importance of decision making	4.18	.812	4	.2073
Asked to serve/be involved	4.16	.801	3	.3581
Sense of professionalism	4.01	.752	3	.5217
Sense of ownership	3.91	.871	4	.0170*
Environment of the campus	3.74	1.037	4	.5345
Relationship with administration	3.62	1.058	4	.0630
Communal atmosphere	3.61	1.173	4	.7147
Attitude toward students	3.42	1.026	4	.0941
Quest for knowledge	3.29	1.070	4	.0490*
Self-interest	3.02	1.124	4	.6646

*denotes significant difference between responses based on task or process orientation.

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